

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Walden Pond State Reservation Parks as Classrooms Module

Spring 2007

Introduction

About Parks As Classrooms . 1

About this Module 3

About Walden Pond State
Reservation 7

Thoreau's Place and Time . 15

Observing like Thoreau..... 19

A Walk with Henry23

Writing like Thoreau27

The Timelines that Shape Us
.....29

Historical Timeline33

Appendices



The Making of a Naturalist

Spring 2007

Print Version 1

About Parks As Classrooms and DCR

Welcome! You and your students have chosen to participate in one of the many quality curriculum-based educational programs hosted in Massachusetts by the

Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Parks As Classrooms is one of the ways we invite young people to engage in our natural and cultural resources.

Stewardship Responsibility

For more than one hundred years the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has proudly served as steward to one of the oldest and largest state park systems in the country. As one of Massachusetts' principal conservation agencies, the DCR serves to protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well being of all. DCR manages these resources for the safe enjoyment of the public and preserves them as part of the heritage we will pass to future generations.

While it is one of the smallest states in the country, Massachusetts stands as the sixth largest parks system, having set aside close to a half-million acres, or

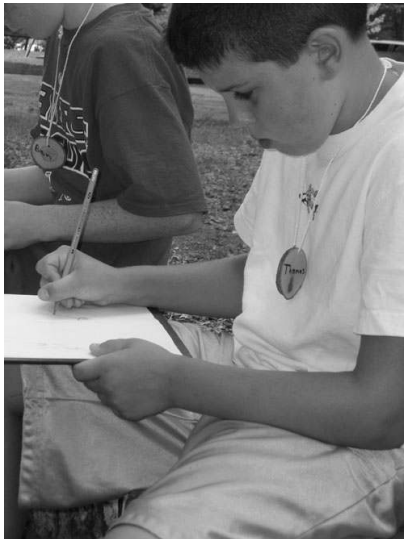
10% of its land area, for its residents and visitors. Massachusetts' parks system offers hundreds of facilities from the commonwealth's highest peak at Mount Greylock to the shores of Cape Cod and the Islands. More than 35,000,000 people a year take advantage of the resources of the park system!

Stewardship Legacy

Massachusetts' role as an environmental steward began in 1891 with the creation of the Trustees of Public Reservations, followed by the Metropolitan District Commission in 1892. The first State Reservation, 400 acres on Mt. Greylock, was established in 1898. Today DCR continues to lead the nation in exemplary natural resource and recreation programs. The state's Universal Access Program is a national model of inclusiveness for visitors of all abilities. DCR's Heritage State Park Program creates destinations for visitors and outdoor opportunities for urban

Parks As Classrooms and DCR

Introduction



A student recording his observations at one of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's facilities

communities by integrating the rich cultural history of New England's urban areas with reclaimed natural features. DCR's vast network of land boasts some of the most beautiful scenery in New England and endless recreational opportunities. Other notable treasures comprise DCR's system including Olmstead's Emerald Necklace, Thoreau's Walden Pond and the Bay Colony's Plymouth Rock. Our lands and waters offer unique and valuable archeological, geological and biological resources that are important parts of our cultural heritage.

Stewardship through Education

An important component of our stewardship of these lands is education. Through interpretation and environmental education the Department strives to offer enlightening programs that lead to an understanding and appreciation of our natural resources.

Parks As Classrooms is an initiative that uses a facility's unique character to provoke critical thinking skills about our environment. Modules include activities for the field and classroom

that span disciplines, learning styles, and teaching techniques.

Dedication to programming is the cornerstone of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's policy of fostering stewardship in the State's natural and cultural resources.

Your Stewardship Role

Enjoy your program! By introducing your students to their natural or cultural heritage, you are helping to build a mindful citizenry with critical thinking skills and community awareness. Building and maintaining a world-class park system takes participation on many levels. We all have an important part to play in sustaining a park system of this size and diversity.

If you or your participants would like to explore more of the state, from seashores to mountaintops to areas steeped in the history of our nation, please contact us at:

DCR Bureau of Ranger Services
251 Causeway St., Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626-1463
or

www.massparks.org

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist: an environmental education module

This module provides education about design and use of landscapes through hands-on activities and direct experience with natural and cultural resources.

The intent of this module is to expose young people to Walden Pond State Reservation while offering educators a means to incorporate these opportunities into their curriculum.

The Henry David Thoreau: The Making of a Naturalist builds upon the idea that environmental and social factors influence a person's life path. Specifically, activities in this packet provide exposure to world, national, local, and personal events encouraged Henry David Thoreau to develop observational skills and to become a naturalist. This packet includes the instructions and supplemental materials for all the activities included.

How to use this module

The activities and experiences are designed for students from middle school based on develop-

mental levels and Massachusetts' Curriculum Frameworks. Teachers may choose to adapt individual activities for different age groups.

There are three different types of activities in this packet: pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit activities.

Pre-visit activities. These activities are designed to introduce students to some of the concepts and vocabulary related to what they will learn on their visit to the park. Students and interpreters benefit from this previous awareness, as it gives new material and ideas a place to "stick" and facilitates more efficient learning during their visit. Generally, the more pre-visit experiences the students have, the more worthwhile their visit will be. There may be specific activities the visit coordinator may request teachers to perform with their students.

Use pre-visit activities to enhance students' visit to Walden Pond State Reservation.

About this Module

Introduction

Self-guided on-site activities provide structure and supporting activities for field experiences.

Use post-visit or unused pre-visit activities to reinforce students' experiences after their visit.

On-site activities. These activities are conducted during the students' visit to the park. While some of these activities are conducted by interpreters at the facility, some of them may self-guided by teachers. This is particularly useful when a large group needs to be broken up into smaller units. The outlines in this packet indicate whether an activity is intended to be facilitated or self-guided.

The full text of guided activities is included here so teachers can become familiar with and participate in the content their students will experience on their visit.

If you will be conducting an activity from this module on-site, procedure and content provided

here. Materials and equipment may be supplied by the facility, but for these and other questions, please ask your visit coordinator.

Post-visit activities. These activities are included to provide closure to the students' visit to the park. These activities may extend concepts, reinforce ideas, or provide a conduit to further related study. In many cases, post-visit activities complete the learning experience, and your visit coordinator will recommend one for your students. Otherwise, feel free to use these or even unused pre-visit activities to support your students' visit.

Introductory material and Appendices. Some of the background information and other

Entering her thoughts on Red Cross Beach at Walden Pond State Reservation



Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

supporting material does not fit neatly into an activity. Use the introduction sections and appendices for more information.

Worksheets. Some of the activities have accompanying worksheets, handouts, or props. These materials are located in the back pocket of the packet and are referenced by name in the text of the activity.

Outline of your visit to Walden State Reservation

The day is broken into three parts: 1) the introduction, 2) ac-

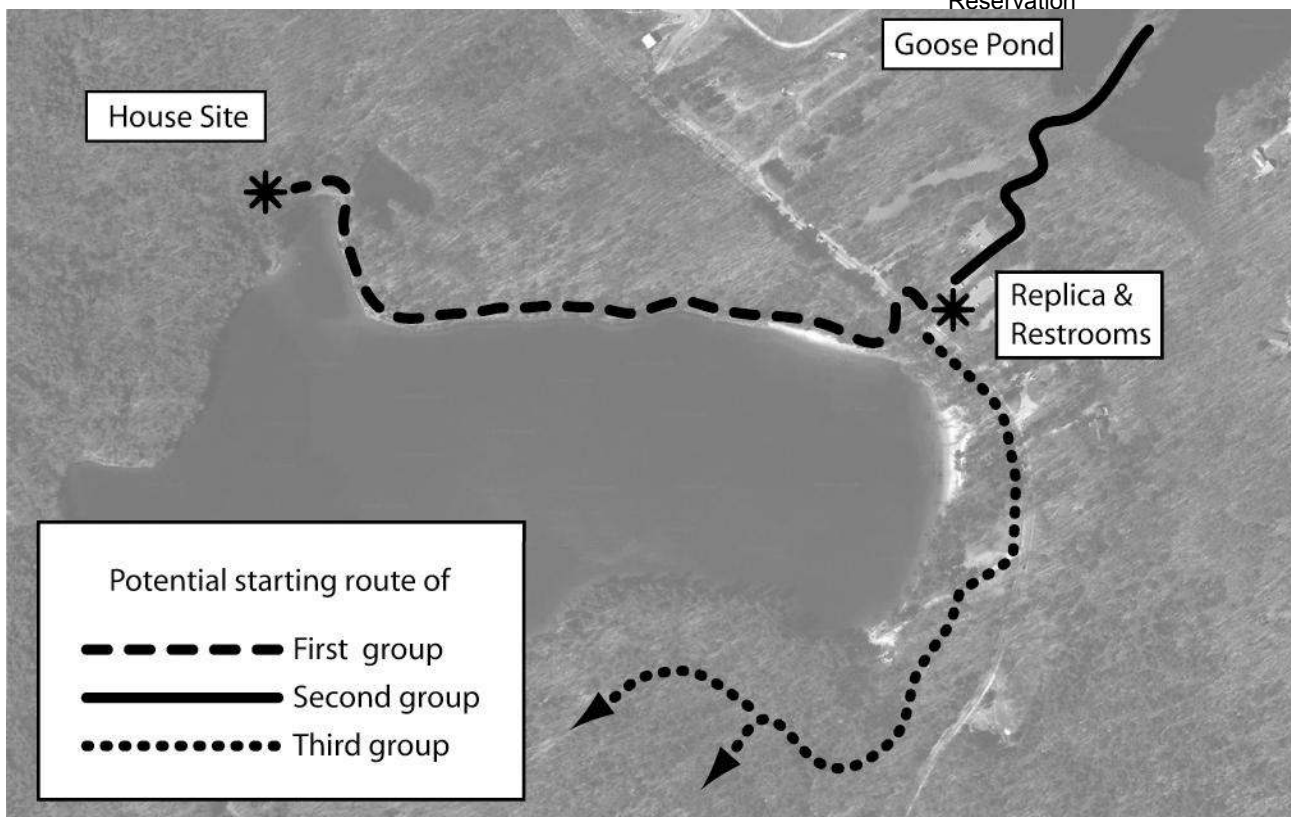
tivity periods, and 3) closing.

Large groups need to be divided into class-sized groups, and each smaller group will cycle through sessions. Large groups may consider splitting the day with another local heritage site. Contact your site coordinator for details.

When schools arrive at the park, the interpreter will meet them at Thoreau's house replica (near the parking lot).

Introduction. The interpreter will briefly outline the day and provide an overview. He or she

This illustration shows how a school with three classes would rotate through three sessions. Smaller groups could use this format as well to take advantage of a full day at Walden State Reservation



About the Module

Introduction

The following chart provides recommended lengths of stay for programming purposes:

Students	Number of Session	Minimum Length of Stay
0-25	2	2 hrs
25-50	2	2 hrs
50-75	3	3 hrs
75+	Discuss arrangements with site coordinator	

will conduct opening discussion and review the pre-visit activity with the whole group.

Activity Periods. The interpreter will take the first group on a tour of the pond trail, leaving from the house replica and going to the house site. Along the way, the interpreter will describe Thoreau’s intentions for coming to Walden, who and what were his influences, what he accomplished there, and what he did after he left.

Teachers will lead the second group down the trail to Goose pond, where they will conduct an observational exercise called “Observing like Thoreau.”

Teachers will also lead the third and other groups. These activity periods can be added to the rotation and filled with self-guided trail walks (maps provided), lunch sessions, or free periods.

Closing. At the end of the day, the interpreter will meet the entire group at the house replica to process information gathered during the activities, finalize the timeline of Thoreau’s life, and introduce post-visit activities.

About Walden Pond State Reservation

Renowned author and naturalist Henry David Thoreau once made his home at Walden Pond. Now part of the state park system, Walden Pond State Reservation

includes 436 acres of protected open space so visitors from near and far may come to experience the pond that inspired Thoreau. A replica of Thoreau's house and location of his modest home are available for viewing by the public.

Henry David Thoreau

In 1845, Henry David Thoreau went to live and work at Walden Pond. He stayed for two years, keeping a journal of his thoughts and encounters with nature and society. He continued to collect and revise these observation during the next seven years and published them in the book *Walden*, in 1854.

Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817 in the village of Concord, Massachusetts. Under the influence of his brother John, an amateur ornithologist, he developed an early interest in nature and spent much of his

youth exploring the town's ponds and woods.

He began his formal education at Concord Academy and continued his studies at Harvard College. An avid reader and note taker, Thoreau was interested in subjects as diverse as Greek mythology and English ballads. During this time, Ralph Waldo Emerson moved to Concord to begin his career as a writer and lecturer. Thoreau admired Emerson's 1836 essay, *Nature*, which advanced the then unique idea that each individual should seek a spiritually fulfilling relationship with the natural world.

After graduating from Harvard in 1837, Thoreau returned to Concord, where he taught school, improved and expanded his family's pencil-making business and engaged in carpentry, stonemasonry and gardening. He began his lifelong friendship and

About Walden Pond State Reservation

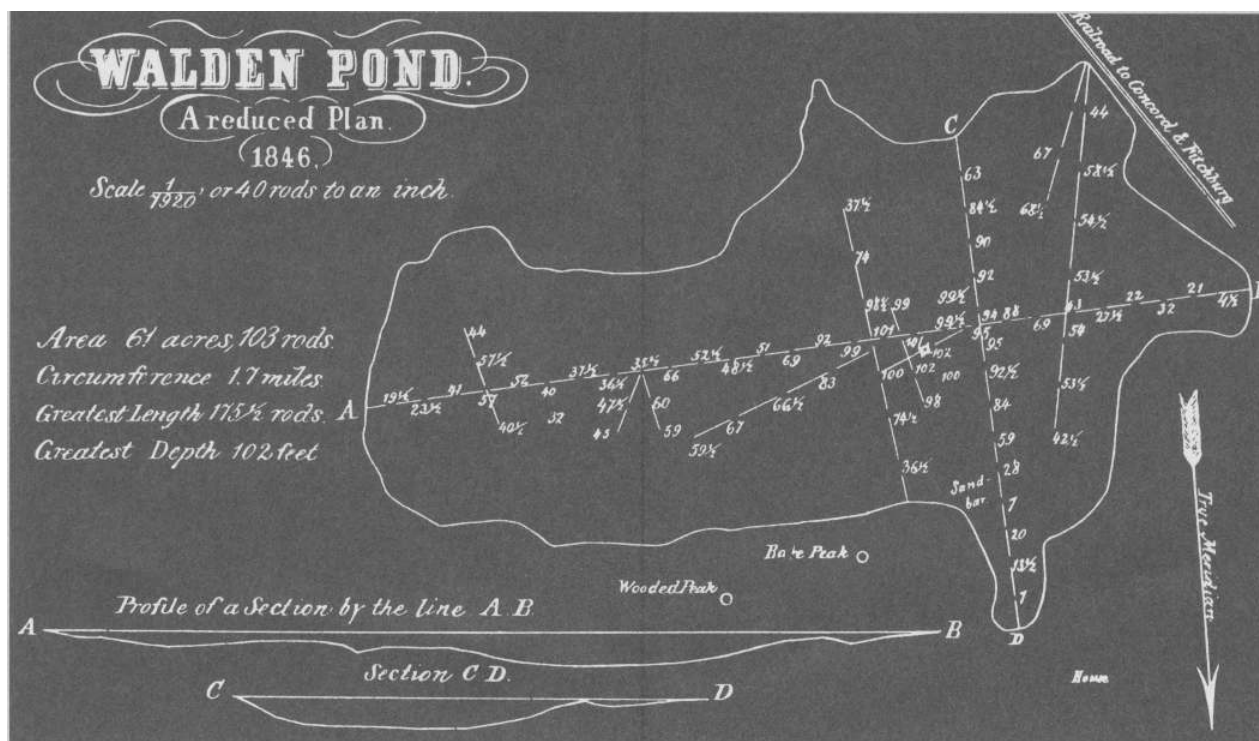
Introduction

association with Emerson, who introduced him to other writers and nonconformist thinkers who were making Concord the center of new ideas. Among them were Bronson Alcott, Ellery Channing, Margaret Fuller and Nathaniel Hawthorne. Emerson, who valued Thoreau's practical talent and companionship, invited him to live in the Emerson household. Grief brought them closer together. The Emersons' first son died just two weeks after the death of Thoreau's beloved brother, John. Three years later, Thoreau, still suffering from his loss, wanted to live in the

woods and embark on his career as a writer. When Emerson offered him the use of a newly purchased woodlot at Walden Pond, Thoreau gladly accepted.

Walden Pond was surrounded by one of few remaining woodlands in a heavily farmed area. In March of 1845, Thoreau began planning and building his one room house. On July 4 of that year, he took up residence. He studied natural history, gardened, wrote in his journal, and drafted his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, a story of a trip taken with his brother in 1839. He also made the first

Thoreau made the first accurate survey at Walden Pond. This map of depth soundings taken in 1846 appeared in the first edition of *Walden*.



Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

accurate survey of the pond. By no means a hermit, he frequently walked to the village, entertained visitors at his house and hired himself out as a surveyor.

In September of 1847, Thoreau completed his experiment in simplicity and became a sojourner in civilized life again. Thoreau gave the house to Emerson, who sold it to his gardener. Two years later two farmers bought it and moved it to the other side of Concord where they used it to store grain. In 1868, they dismantled it for scrap lumber and put the roof on an outbuilding.

After his Walden experience, Thoreau applied his skills as a surveyor and pencil-maker to earn what little money he needed for things he could not grow or make due without. He spent his free time walking, studying, writing and lecturing at the Concord Lyceum and elsewhere in New England.

Thoreau became increasingly involved with social and political issues of this time. He often spoke out against economic injustice and slavery. With other members of his

family, Thoreau helped runaway slaves escape to freedom in Canada. His 1849 essay, *Civil Disobedience*, eventually brought him international recognition.

On May 6, 1862 at the age of 44, the self-appointed inspector of snowstorms and rainstorms and author renowned for motivating the world to value our natural environment, died after a prolonged struggle with tuberculosis. He is buried on Authors' Ridge at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord.

History of the Reservation

Henry David Thoreau's sojourn at Walden started a long tradition of people coming to the pond and its surrounding woods for recreation and inspiration. The emergence of Walden as a public park was in keeping with the belief that nature is meant to be enjoyed by people. "I think that each town should have a park... a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation," he wrote in an 1859 journal entry lamenting the deforestation that had taken place around Walden. "All Walden wood might have been preserved for our park

About Walden Pond State Reservation

Introduction

forever, with Walden in its midst.”

In the latter part of the 19th century, numerous projects were undertaken to make Walden Pond a public destination for recreation. The Fitchburg Railroad, which had laid tracks past Walden the year before Thoreau took up residence there, built an excursion park on the shore at Ice Fort Cove in 1866. The facilities were mainly used for fund-raisers, festivals and groups. The park included concessions, swings, bathhouses, boats, a baseball diamond, a hall for dining, dancing and public speaking and a cinder track for runners and bicyclists. The park burned down in 1902 and was never rebuilt.

The automobile brought increasing numbers of visitors to Walden Pond. The Town of Concord began offering swimming lessons in 1913 and new bathhouses were built in 1917. Summer visitation had risen to 2,000 visitors a day even before the bathhouses were built.

In 1922 the Emerson, Forbes and Heywood families granted approximately 80 acres surrounding the pond to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with the stipulation of “preserving the Walden of Emerson and Thoreau, its shores and nearby woodlands for the public who wish to enjoy the pond, the woods and nature, including bathing, boating, fishing and picknicking.” Middlesex County was given the responsibility for management of the reservation. In the summer of 1935, some 485,000 people visited Walden Pond, with Sunday crowds numbering as high as 25,000 visitors.

In November of 1945, the centennial of Thoreau’s move to Walden, Roland Wells Robbins, an amateur historian and Thoreau enthusiast discovered and excavated the foundation of Thoreau’s chimney. In July of 1947, the Thoreau Society dedicated the inscribed fieldstone that marks the hearth site today. In 1965, the National Park Service designated Walden Pond as a Registered National Historic Landmark.

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

In 1975, the Department of Environmental Management assumed responsibility for managing the reservation. It became part of the Massachusetts State Forests and Parks system that currently consists of over 285,000 acres of protected land throughout the state.

Today, it is estimated that approximately 600,000 people visit the reservation each year. In an effort to balance public recreation with protection of the resource, DEM has established a 'people capacity' at the park to ensure a positive visitor experience and to maintain the integrity of the resources. Trail activities are limited to foot traffic. Land

bank erosion is controlled by redirecting access points to the pond and embedding natural stabilizing materials. It is this quality of stewardship that will keep Walden, in the words of Thoreau, "preserved for our park forever."

Natural History of Walden Pond

By the time the Commonwealth acquired the land in 1922, much of Walden's forest had been cut down. The woods have since grown back so the vegetation resembles the hard and soft wood mix of Thoreau's day and includes mostly berry bushes, sumac, pitch pine, hickory and oak. Above



The shoreline of Walden Pond with the swimming beach in the middle ground.

About Walden Pond State Reservation

Introduction

Thoreau's house site are stumps of some of the 400 white pines planted by Thoreau leveled by the great hurricane of 1938.

Much of the wildlife of Thoreau's time can still be found. Gray squirrels, chipmunks and rabbits are common. Skunks, raccoons and red foxes are active at night, but can occasional be seen shortly before sunset or after sunrise. Kingfishers, blackbirds, chickadees and red-tail hawks can often be seen flying among the trees or over the water. In the spring and fall, migratory ducks and geese pass overhead and land in nearby marshes for food and rest. As noted by Thoreau, the pond "is not very fertile in fish. Its pickerel, though not very abundant, are its chief boast." The pickerel disappeared around the turn of the century and the pond is now stocked with rainbow trout annually. In addition, sunfish, perch and bass compete for crayfish.

Walden Pond is a kettle hole, a deep (103 foot) pond formed over 12,000 years ago when the last glacier to cover New England slowly melted away. As it did, large chunks of ice

broke off and became surrounded and covered by vast amounts of sand and gravel carried by streams flowing from the glacier. As these blocks melted, they left behind depressions that eventually filled with water. Because of this geological history, most kettle holes like Walden Pond have no streams flowing into or out of them.

Activities

Thoreau's Place and Time

Activity in Brief

“... I ... have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too.” Students will be given a narrative of part of Henry Thoreau's life that puts it in a historical context. The story is reinforced with a timeline activity that illustrates cause-and-effect relationships between world events and Thoreau's decisions.

Background

A naturalist is one versed in natural sciences, one who explores and tries to understand the natural world around him or her. Some naturalists are also skilled communicators who share what they learn with others. John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson are examples of these kinds of naturalists. Thoreau was also a naturalist, one of the first in fact, and inspired many others' interest in nature as well, especially through his writing.

Thoreau considered himself a naturalist or a “man of science,” as he was seeking a better understanding of nature for personal and spiritual reasons. Bronson Alcott, a contemporary, described him as “out poet-naturalist, our seer of the seasons”

Thoreau was also an activist for social causes as well, including abolitionism.

How did Thoreau become a world-renowned “poet-naturalist?” In a journal entry dated December 5, 1856, Thoreau wrote “I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too.”¹

From the industrial revolution to the death of his brother, the



¹ Odell Shepard, *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals*, New York: Dover 1961

Pre-visit Activity

Objectives

- ① Students will name at least 3 historic events that took place between 1800 and 1850.
- ② Students will describe Thoreau's life as a boy.

Activity at a Glance

Grade level: Middle school

Subject Areas: History, language arts (historical figures in literature)

Duration:

Prep: 10 minutes

Activity: 45 minutes

Setting: Classroom

Skills: Chronology, cause-and-effect, reading for content, supporting a position with a source

Vocabulary: Henry David Thoreau, naturalist

Materials: Copies of Henry David Thoreau's Story (enclosed), copies of timeline (enclosed or make your own), Event cards (enclosed), tape, markers

Thoreau's Place and Time

Pre-visit Activity

events and people in his life influenced Henry David Thoreau.

Procedure

Prepare the activity materials, including the *event cards* (one set per class), the blank timeline (one per class), and a copy of the reading for each student. The blank timeline can be a copy from the worksheet “Thoreau’s Place and Time” (tape the pages together) or made from your own materials. If you create your own, note that this activity only addresses the first part of Thoreau's life, until he visits Walden Pond. A timeline for the part of his life during and after Walden will be given as a handout at the park.

Distribute copies of the story to each student to read, either in class or in advance of the activity.

Hang the blank timeline on the wall or on a table so students can have access to it.

Activity

1. Invite students to react to the story of Henry David Thoreau as a child. What are some of the similarities and differences to your childhood? What were some

of the major events in the world that happened while he was growing up? How do you think these events shaped him?

2. Tell students that they are going to solve a type of puzzle about Henry. Tell them they are going to use what they have learned to answer this central question: **“Why did Henry become a naturalist?”**

3. Distribute the event cards among the students so that each student gets at least one.

4. As a group, using what they learned from the reading, students play a game where they place their event cards on the timeline where they think they fit best. Some students have cards that are verifiable (with dates), and others are open for interpretation.

5. When all the cards are on the timeline, begin a discussion about how they decided to place the cards. How did they decide one card came before another?

6. At the close of this part of the activity, use the answer key to help students correct the position of misaligned cards. Allow students an opportunity to offer suggestions, so long as they are

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

supported by a reference to what they read or from supporting material you have provided.

7. When the timeline is complete and correct, as the students to identify patterns they see.

8. Wrap-up the activity by explaining that they will be going on a field trip to Walden Pond. At Walden Pond, students will get the rest of the story of Thoreau's life and will continue to see the connections between events in his life and the decision he made.

Observing Like Henry

Activity in Brief

Being the self-appointed inspector of rainstorms, Thoreau was a world-class observer. By using similar techniques of distant and close-up observation, students will practice Thoreauvian observation and note-taking skills while quietly witnessing the nature around them.

Background

Henry David Thoreau is known around the world for his perspective on human interactions with nature. Much of that perspective he gained by close study of the world in which he lived. Thoreau investigated the ponds, forests, and fields near his home in Concord; he also traveled extensively throughout New England—to the wilderness of Maine, the shores of Cape Cod, and the peaks of the Berkshires—to further his understanding of the natural world.

Thoreau was an avid note-taker, and during his explorations, he remarked on his observations in his journals. Thoreau's journals reveal his style of observation and contemplation: he made careful

inspection of a place or thing with an objective eye, identifying its intrinsic worth. He then detailed his thoughts in his notes, often with a generous amount of commentary about how the natural world reflected society and human endeavors.

Metaphor was a key tool Thoreau used to share his thoughts about nature and humanity. Comparing society to natural events often revealed his feelings about topics ranging from a particular event or political position to human progress. It also added a human element to a topic that was unfamiliar to many people of the day.

Procedure

"For many years, I was the self-appointed inspector of snow storms and rain storms, and did my duty faithfully; surveyor, if not of highways, than of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility."

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, New York: Dover, 1995

Self-Guided On-site Activity

Objectives

- ① Students will apply Thoreau's methods of observation.
- ② Students will record observations of two natural scenes.

Activity at a Glance

Grade level: Middle school

Subject Areas: Science, Language Arts

Duration:

Activity: 45 minutes

Setting: Goose Pond at Walden Pond State Reservation

Skills: Creative writing, writing from notes,

Vocabulary: Metaphor, symbolism, draft, naturalist

Materials: Copies of the "Observing Nature," worksheet, Scrap paper, Pencils, clipboards

Observing Like Henry

Self-guided On-site Activity

Worksheet “Observing Nature,” a viewing frame, a hand lens, and clipboard will be provided for each student. Maps and supporting materials will be provided for teachers.

Activity

1. Lead the group along the Goose Pond Trail to the designated group gathering area to introduce the activity.

Explain to students that Henry David Thoreau was an expert observer of nature, and that

through his observations and writing, he was able to share his views with other people. Read the provided sample quotations to the students to show the way that that Thoreau documented his thoughts in his field notes and journal.

Explain to students that they will be observing nature as Thoreau did, by exploring a particular area on their own. Students will be taking notes on what they observe for use in a future activity and in discussion.

2. Distribute the worksheets and

Instructions for Observation Activity

1. **Find a place to sit** or stand for 20 minutes, far enough away from other students so as not to be distracted. (Stations may be provided at the site.)
2. **Observe a distant scene for 10 minutes.** Holding the viewing frame at arms length, find a scene that is interesting to you. Without changing scenes, write down everything noteworthy in the appropriate section of the worksheet. Sketches are welcome, but you should have an emphasis on using descriptive language. Complete thoughts (sentences) are preferable to lists of words.
3. **Observe something close-up for 10 minutes.** At the signal, change your focus. Again hold the frame at arms-length to frame something interesting nearby (ex. a patch of bark, chewed leaves, or an interesting rock). Students write down their observations on the worksheet, again with a focus on descriptive language and complete thoughts.
4. **Return to the gathering area** at the second signal.

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

equipment to the students and provide the instructions for the activity (see text box).

3. Help students find a place where they can sit or stand quietly, which is far enough from other students that they will not be tempted to communicate. Depending on student levels, teachers may assign locations, or students may choose their own.

4. Give students the first signal indicating that they should have a distant scene selected and should begin recording their observations. After 10 minutes pass, give another signal indicating that they should move on to the close-up scene. After another 10 minutes, give the final signal for students to return.

5. Debrief students about their experience. Invite students to share responses to the following questions:

- What was it like focusing on one scene and writing about it for that period of time?
- Which scene did they find easier/more challenging to describe.
- How did it feel to sit quietly along in the woods?

Ask students to share some of the interesting things they saw. Encourage students to read their work in addition to (or instead of) just speaking about them.

6. In closing, explain to students that they will be using the notes they took during this exercise for a follow-up exercise so see how Henry Davis Thoreau used observation and note-taking to share his beliefs about nature with others.

Assessment

The post-visit activity “Writing like Thoreau” serves as an assessment to this activity by synthesizing student observations about the places they visited.

A Walk with Henry

Activity in Brief

Famed American author Henry David Thoreau is most often remembered for his now historic written account of his life in the woods alone along the shores of Walden Pond. Despite the fame, his solitary experience and the reasons for it are often mis-understood. Why did he choose to live at Walden Pond and what was he seeking to find there? On this guided walking tour, students visit a replica of Thoreau's single room house and the location of where he lived to learn the influences behind these life choices Thoreau had to make. Personal choices which would have a lasting significance on him and on generations to follow.

Outline of Walden Pond Tour

Thoreau's Transcendental Transformation

At the replica

At the Thoreau statue, interpreters will provide the students with a welcome to the park and an overview of the day's activities. Staff and teachers ensure that students are prepared for this outdoor experience.

Prelude to Walden: Park staff will review with the students Thoreau's life events and influences up until 1845. Events and influences such as his boyhood, attending Harvard, stays at Flint's Pond, meets Mr. Emerson, teaching career, meets Mr. Channing, boat trip with his brother and the death of his brother. Students

will discuss these events and surmise which of these may have been influential in his decision to move to Walden.

Private Business: Students learn why Thoreau is seeking solitude, so that he can "transact some private business" and how Walden Pond becomes his destination.

Life's Essentials: Before Thoreau can get down to work he must first obtain the essentials for all life (food, water, shelter & space). Students view the replica of Thoreau's House to see how these essentials were achieved. Park staff explain how Thoreau did more than just survive at the pond but lived an active and independent life of nature observation, personal reflection, walking and journaling.

A Walk with Henry

Guided On-site Activity

Pond in the Woods At Red Cross Beach

As students walk along the shore of Walden Pond towards the actual House Site, students discover and observe the physical setting of Walden Pond. Discussion on how the setting met his needs and why it was an easy choice for him to make.

Transcending Society At Sandy Point

Park staff share with the students more about what Thoreau did with his days at Walden and the effects of his transcendental beliefs. Why did he value his independence and time so much? Did his lifestyle correspond with his philosophy on life? Notice the

proximity of the railroad and how it became a symbol for the Industrial Revolution. After reading aloud selected excerpts from *Walden*, discuss how Thoreau used symbols and metaphors in his writing to contrast his lifestyle with the lifestyle of those who rode on the railroad.

Inkstand in the Woods At the House Site

Students view the historical area and see a sketch of Thoreau's Walden House. After students become oriented to the house site location, park staff discuss the goals Thoreau set for himself while living there. How did long walks in the woods and floating across the pond help him reach those goals? Learn what books he brought with him to read and what book was he there to write? Students will learn about his tireless motivation and dedication to his writing goal.

Curve Ball. Students hear a factual account of Thoreau's arrest. Why was he arrested and why did he *choose* to go to jail? Learn how his quiet life and writing in the woods gets temporarily sidetracked by his principles. What did Thoreau gain and lose from

This is the site of Henry David Thoreau's cabin, which was a humble structure by the side of Walden Pond.



Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

this unexpected detour in his life?
How did the world benefit?

Reputation Precedes Him. Thoreau's unusual lifestyle, beliefs and actions generates an unfavorable reputation for himself. How did he respond to all of his critics?

Leaving the Woods. Thoreau "left the woods for as good as reason as why I came". Students learn how Thoreau met all of his objectives in short order and was remarkably productive.

Legacy. Thoreau's two year experiment in living at Walden was private, personal and unconventional lifestyle and motivated by many significant influences. But it did lead to the production of three major pieces of writing. One piece, which was the most important to Thoreau himself while the other two pieces go on in time to become masterpieces in American Literature and are still in the 21st century world renowned and read. Reflect on how influences led Thoreau to Walden and how Thoreau in turn has led others to Walden. View the cairn of rocks and show how it provides tangible proof of his influence from Louisa May Alcott and

Ralph Waldo Emerson to Herman Melville and John Muir to President Kennedy and Martin Luther King and to Gandhi and the world today.

Program concludes.
Options available as time allows

- A. Walk back with guide to next location for additional activities.
- B. Stay near House Site for self guided quiet reflection and journaling.
- C. Continue walk self-guided around the remainder of the pond (1 mile)

Students will end their guided tour at the site where Henry David Thoreau lived for two years, two months, and two day during his experiment in simplicity. Like travelers before them, students can place a rock on the cairn in honor of Thoreau



Writing like Thoreau

Activity in Brief

Thoreau's style of writing is noted for its detail and ability to humanize nature. This is due in large part to his observation and note-taking skill. In this activity, students will use their notes to begin the writing process.

Procedure

Prepare copies of the worksheet, "Thoreau's Words: Before and After" for each student.

Activity

1. Begin by asking students to remember different parts of the landscape they saw on their visit to Walden Pond. Record the students' observations on a whiteboard or flipchart.

2. Just as the students made notes during their field experience, Henry David Thoreau also took notes about nature. Thoreau used those notes to compile these ideas in his journal. Ask students how they would rewrite their field notes for their own private use, without planning on ever sharing it with others. Thoreau used his notes and journal to write essays and for others to read. How would these two approaches differ? Ask students how would they share they would share their

observations with friends, family, or an unknown audience.

3. Pass out copies of the worksheet, and ask students to read them. You may choose to have them read them to themselves or aloud. The worksheet has paired passages: one is from Thoreau's journals, and one is from a publication it inspired.

Discuss the passages and look for literary devices Thoreau used, including metaphor and symbolism.

4. Instruct students to look at the notes they took during the observational exercise. (Redistribute them if they were collected after the activity.)

5. Tell students that they will write two reflections on their experience at Walden Pond. One will be a private piece, like a journal entry. The other piece is intended to be shared with others. A characteristic of Thoreau's writing, in addition to his attention to detail, is his use of

Post-visit Activity

Objectives

- ① Students will identify a writing process that authors use to transform their experience into a finished product.
- ② Students will observe the use of metaphor and symbolize in nature writing.
- ③ Students will create a finished essay using field notes

Activity at a Glance

Grade level: Middle School

Subject Areas: Language Arts

Duration:

Part A: *Prep:* 10 minutes, *Activity:* one or several class periods, depending on student levels and desired depth of programming

Setting: Classroom

Skills: Comparing and contrasting, writing for detail, creative writing, writing from notes,

Vocabulary: metaphor, symbolism, draft, naturalist

Materials: Copies of the "Thoreau's Words: Before and After," "Thoreau's Metaphors," Field notes from observational exercise

Writing Like Thoreau

Post-visit Activity

metaphor, comparing natural events to human affairs. He also often referred to other people's writing and additional research to help make connections.

Encourage students to use the example on the worksheet to write in Thoreau's manner of writing.

Note: The student's writings could be as long as several pages or as short as 20 words; adjust the depth of the assignment for your needs. The important part is that students will have three examples of their own to compare—their field notes, their personal journal entry, and their finished product.

6. Allow students to do additional research about things they observed but don't know well. Students may also include their personal thoughts or other experiences. Remind them, however that their essay should be about what they observed while at the park.

7. You may choose to encourage students to write a rough draft first, to further illustrate the writing process.

8. When students complete the assignment, lead a discussion about what the students felt when

writing each piece. How did they approach each exercise differently? Did they choose words differently whether or not someone else would be reading it?

9. Invite students to share their essay with the class. Students may also share their journal entries as well. Ask students how it felt to share their writing. Compare the writings to see if other students could relate to what they heard.

10. In closing, ask how their writing reflects the landscape at Walden Pond.

The Timelines that Shape Us

Activity in Brief

Henry David Thoreau—the writer, the naturalist, the activist—was a product of many factors in his life. All of us are, too. In this activity, students will construct a timeline of their own life and use it to help set goals for their own lives, and then write an essay about it.

Procedure

Activity- Part A

1. Review the completed outline of Thoreau’s life and the story “The Making of a Naturalist” with the students. Review some of the connections revealed on the field trip between the events of Thoreau’s life and his becoming a naturalist. Conclude with the students that the events and people in our lives have a significant impact on how our lives are shaped.

2. Have the class brainstorm major events and significant people that have happened during their lifetime. These may be local, national, or international news items that have had local impact. Post these items to create a class list. During the discussion, have students consider significant personal events or people in their lives and note them privately.

3. As a class, students will assemble a large timeline of the events on the class list. Research

may need to be done to find the dates and impacts of specific items. An option is to split up the class list, have students research them, and have them report back.

4. Instruct students to use items from the class list and their private list to construct a timeline of events that impacted them personally. Students can model Thoreau’s timeline for format.

Note: This portion of the activity can be done as simply as stated above; however students will get more out of the exercise if they are given the opportunity to research a personal set of local and world events. Another is to have students look for significant events individually to include on their timeline.

Note also that this portion of the activity is meant to be personal, and care should be given when choosing to require students to share their results.

5. When students have completed their timelines, discuss

Post-visit Activity

Objectives

① Students will synthesize the connections between Thoreau’s life experiences and his life as a naturalist

② Students will identify significant events during the period of their own lives

③ Students will articulate their desired future based on their experiences

Activity at a Glance

Grade level: Middle School

Subject Areas: Social Studies

Duration:

Part A: *Prep:* 10 minutes, *Activity:* One or several class periods

Part B: *Activity:* One or several periods, or done outside of class

Setting: Classroom

Skills:

Vocabulary:

Materials: Timeline of Thoreau’s life, Large paper, markers, crayons, etc.

The Timelines that Shape Us

Post-visit Activity

with the class the connections between the events in their lives and the direction their lives have taken. As a class, try to mark patterns among students.

Activity-Part B

Students will extend their timeline into the future and use it to help predict what they might become.

6. Instruct students to extend their timeline 10 years. For the future years, suggest that students insert goals or predictions where personal events would be. For example, at year four, students might write “go to college.” For interest, students may also try to predict the future of local, national, or international events.

7. Assign students to write an essay incorporating the goals and predictions from their timeline. The essay could be titled “The Making of _____,” and should answer the following questions:

- What do you want to become and why?
- How do you foresee yourself getting to that point?
- Explain what experiences (past or present) have guided you in the direction of your lives.

Appendices

Historical Timeline

The following timeline is provided as a supplement to “Thoreau’s Place and Time” and as a bridge between Thoreau’s timeline and students’ timelines.

This list is for reference only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

- # 1775 Battles of Lexington and Concord
- * 1775 Harvard University is moved temporarily to Concord, Ma
- # 1776 Declaration of Independence
- # 1780 Boston becomes state capitol of Massachusetts
- + 1783 Treaty of Paris (ends Revolutionary War)
- # 1786 Shay’s Rebellion
- # 1788 Constitution ratified
- # 1789-1797 George Washington is President
- * 1789 First American Novel *Power of Sympathy* published by William Hill Brown, Worcester, Ma.
- # 1789 Bill of Rights adopted
- + 1789 French Revolution
- # 1793 Eli Whitney invents cotton gin
- # 1793 Invention of the telegraph
- + 1800 Electric battery invented by Volta
- # 1803 Louisiana Purchase
- * 1803 Birth of Ralph Waldo Emerson
- * 1804 Middlesex Canal opens (27 miles from Chelmsford to Boston)
- # 1804 Lewis and Clark expedition
- * 1804 Birth of Nathaniel Hawthorne
- + 1806 Noah Webster publishes the *Compendious Dictionary of English Language*

Timeline Symbols Key:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| + | World history |
| # | American history |
| * | Local history |
| ! | Thoreau’s history |

Historical Timeline

Appendix

- + 1812 War of 1812
- * 1814 Boston manufacturing Company established, Waltham, Ma
- # 1814 Steam locomotive developed
- !! 1817 Henry David Thoreau is born in Concord, Ma
- # 1819 Birth of Walt Whitman
- # 1820 Federal Government offers land out West for \$1.25 an acre
- # 1820 Maine separates from Massachusetts and becomes a state as part of the Missouri compromise
- # 1827 Audubon publishes *Birds of America*
- * 1831 *The Liberator* is published by William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, Ma
- # 1832 Louisa May Alcott is born, Germantown, PA
- # 1832 Samuel Moorse designs telegraph
- + 1834 Slavery is abolished by the British Empire
- * 1835 Boston/Lowell railroad established
- # 1836 Siege of the Alamo
- * 1836 Ralph Waldo Emerson publishes *Nature*
- * 1836 Transcendental Club formed
- !! 1837 Henry David Thoreau graduates from Harvard and starts a journal
- !! 1837 Henry reads *Nature* by Ralph Waldo Emerson
- * 1837 Women's Anti-slavery society formed in Concord by Cynthia Thoreau (Henry's mom)
- # 1838 Cherokee Trail of Tears
- !! 1838-1841 After graduating from Harvard with a degree in education, Thoreau opens a private school with his brother, John.
- # 1838 Birth of John Muir
- !! 1839 Henry hosts his first watermelon party
- !! 1839 Henry and John Thoreau take a trip on Concord and Merrimack River
- + 1839 Slave revolt on the *Amistad*

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

- * 1839 Thoreau works in his father's pencil factory
- * 1840 Typewriter invented by Charles Thurber, Worcester, Ma
- * 1841 George Ripley starts *Brook Farm*, Roxbury, Ma
- * 1841 Thoreau goes to live with the Emerson family where he tutors their children.
- !! 1842 John Thoreau Jr. dies from Tetanus
- !! 1842 Hawthorne moves into the Old Manse. Henry plants a garden for him.
- * 1843 Alcott starts *Fruitlands*, Harvard, Ma
- * 1843 Thoreau works in his father's pencil factory and makes improvements in the lead pencil making process.
- * 1844 Emerson purchases 14 acres of land surrounding Walden Pond.
- * 1844 The Boston and Maine Railroad completes the Fitchburg line that passes the western shore of the pond.
- * 1844 Thoreau hikes up Mt. Greylock with Ellery Channing
- * 1845 First sewing machine invented by Elias Howe, Boston, Ma
- !! 1845 On July 4th, Henry David Thoreau moves into his cabin at Walden Pond
- !! 1846 Thoreau spends historic night in jail for refusing to pay his poll tax.
- !! 1846 Henry David Thoreau measures the depth of Walden Pond
- * 1846 Concord's anti-slavery society meets at Walden Pond
- * 1846 First use of ether as anesthesia demonstrated in Boston
- * 1846 First year of the famine in Ireland
- * 1846 Concord's Female anti-slavery society meets at Walden Pond
- !! 1847 Thoreau leaves Walden Pond
- # 1848 First American women's rights convention, Seneca Falls, New York.
- # 1848 Gold discovered in California
- # 1849 Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery
- !! 1849 Henry David Thoreau's cabin is purchased by James Clark. Cabin is moved to the Clark farm in Concord.

Historical Timeline

Appendix

- !! 1849 Thoreau publishes *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*
- !! 1849 Thoreau's cabin is purchased by two farmers and moved to the Clark farm in Concord. It is used for grain storage.
- !! 1849 Thoreau publishes *Civil Disobedience*
- * 1850 Nathaniel Hawthorne writes *Scarlet Letter*
- # 1850 Fugitive Slave Act
- # 1851 Herman Melville writes *Moby Dick*
- # 1851 Singer patents sewing machine
- # 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- # 1854 Republican party formed
- * 1854 Thoreau publishes *Walden or Life in the Woods*
- * 1854 Thoreau delivers essay *Slavery in Massachusetts*
- * 1854 Massachusetts passes the *Personal Liberty Law* (makes Fugitive Slave Act null and void)
- * 1856 Massachusetts antislavery senator Charles Sumner is attacked on the floor of the U.S. Senate
- !! 1857 Thoreau meets John Brown
- # 1858 Lincoln/Douglas debates
- # 1859 John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry
- !! 1859 Thoreau delivers his lecture *A Plea for Captain John Brown*
- # 1860 Abraham Lincoln is elected President
- # 1861 Civil war begins
- !! 1861 Thoreau makes final journey to Walden Pond
- !! 1862 Thoreau dies from complications of Tuberculosis on May 6th, at age 44
- # 1863 Emancipation proclamation is issued
- # 1865 13th Amendment is ratified
- # 1865 Civil War Ends
- # 1865 President Lincoln is assassinated
- * 1866 Fitchburg railroad establishes the Ice Fort Cove excursion park at Walden Pond.

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

- * 1868 Louisa May Alcott publishes *Little Women*
- * 1868 Thoreau's cabin is dismantled for scrap lumber, the roof is used for a pig barn.
- # 1872 Victoria Woodhull becomes first woman to run for President
- # 1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone
- # 1876 Yellowstone becomes first National Park
- # 1876 General Custer is defeated at Little Big Horn, Montana
- # 1879 Thomas Edison invents incandescent light
- * 1881 Walt Whitman visits Walden Pond
- * 1883/1893 John Muir visits Walden Pond
- # 1890 Yosemite National Park established
- 1891 Fig Newtons produced by Kennedy Biscuit Works (Nabisco) Newton, Ma.
- * 1896 First American public beach in Revere, Ma
- * 1897 First American subway system in Boston, Ma
- # 1902 Roosevelt begins conservation of forests (U.S. Forest Service est.)
- * 1902 Ice Fort Cove Excursion park burns down at Walden Pond
- # 1903 Wright brothers first flight, Kitty Hawk, NC
- # 1903 Ed Binney and Harold Smith invent Crayons
- # 1905 Einstein proposes his *Theory of Relativity*
- # 1906 William Kellogg invents Cornflakes
- # 1906 Thoreau's complete journal is published
- # 1906 San Francisco earthquake
- # 1908 General Electric patents the toaster
- # 1908 Henry Ford introduces the model T
- # 1912 Titanic sinks
- * 1912 Bread and Roses strike, Lawrence, Ma
- # 1912 Lifesavers are created by Clarence Crane
- * 1913 Town of Concord offers swimming lessons at Walden Pond in conjunction with the Red Cross.

Historical Timeline

Appendix

- + 1914 Panama Canal opens for shipping
- * 1917 John F. Kennedy is born, Brookline, Ma
- * 1917 Bathhouse built at Walden Pond
- # 1920 18th Amendment prohibits alcohol
- # 1920 19th Amendment gives women the right to vote
- * 1922 Gift of deed grants 80 acres surrounding Walden Pond to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The land is managed by Middlesex County.
- * 1922-1974 Walden Pond managed by Middlesex County
- # 1927 Lindbergh crosses the Atlantic
- # 1928 Bubble gum is invented by Walter Diemer
- # 1929 Stock Market crash
- # 1935 Social Security Act
- # 1941 Japanese attack Pearl Harbor
- # 1941 Thoreau Society Formed
- # 1943 Slinky is introduced by Richard James
- # 1943 Silly Putty is introduced by James Wright
- + 1945 United Nations formed
- * 1945 On the centennial year of Thoreau's move to Walden, Roland Wells Robbins excavates the chimney foundation of Thoreau's house
- * 1947 Microwave invented by Percy Spencer of Raytheon Corp.
- # 1955 Montgomery bus boycott
- * 1957 To accommodate the increasing number of visitors to the pond, the county bulldozes the slope above Red Cross beach in to the pond and creates a wider, more accessible, beach area.
- # 1960 John F. Kennedy is elected 35th President of the United States
- # 1961 Peace Corps is established
- # 1962 Rachel Carson publishes *Silent Spring*
- # 1962 John Glenn becomes first American to orbit the earth
- # 1962 Cuban Missile crisis

Henry David Thoreau: the Making of a Naturalist

Parks as Classrooms

- # 1963 Martin Luther King delivers his *I Have A Dream Speech*, Washington, D.C.
- # 1965 Walden Pond State Reservation becomes a National Historic landmark
- # 1968 Martin Luther King are assassinated
- # 1969 First manned lunar mission (first men on the moon, Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin, Michael Collins.)
- # 1970 Environmental Protection Agency is introduced
- # 1973 Endangered Species Act
- * 1974 Bussing program to integrate Boston schools
- * 1975 Department of Environmental Management takes over management of Walden Pond State Reservation. A Capacity limit of 1000 people is established and enforced.
- # 1977 Star Wars is created by George Lucas
- # 1979 Cell phones are introduced
- # 1985 Windows is introduced by Microsoft
- * 1985 Thoreau House Replica is built at Walden Pond.
- * 1985 DEM removes the swimming pier and changing rooms located near the Main Beach and renovates the existing bathhouse and shoreline.
- + 1987 Hole in the ozone discovered over Antarctica
- * 1988-Present Shoreline restoration project is established to preserve the fragile shoreline surrounding Walden Pond.
- * 1990 Walden Woods project is established
- # 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing
- # 1997 NASA spacecraft lands on Mars
- * 1997 Shoreline restoration begins at Walden Pond
- * 1998 Thoreau institute opens
- + 1998 Construction begins on the International Space Station
- # 2001 9/11/01 Terrorist bombings of the World Trade Center Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Historical Timeline

Appendix

- * 2003 Merger of Department of Environmental Management and Metropolitan District Commission creates the Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- !! 2002 Thoreau's bean field is discovered
- * 2006 Dedication of Brister's Hill within Walden Woods

An individual's life is shaped by the many influences that surround him or her. Influences, such as historical events occur either locally, regionally, nationally or even worldwide. Individuals are often influenced by the setting in which they live, the people they meet, and the media (newspapers, books, radio and television) which they are exposed to. The following is a story that highlights the life of Henry David Thoreau up to his historic stay at Walden Pond in 1845. Today, he is simply referred to as "Thoreau" and is a renowned writer, philosopher and naturalist around the world. What influences helped to shape his life?

Revolutions and the Nick of Time

Concord, Massachusetts, founded in 1635, was a small, quiet New England town until the **Battle at the North Bridge** between British soldiers (the **Redcoats**) and colonial militia (the **Minutemen**). Concord exploded onto the world scene and into history in **1775** when this battle kick-started the American Revolution. The **American Revolution** waged on for eight long years until the **Peace Treaty of 1783**. After which, with Concord residing on a major trade route and being approximately one day's ride (on horseback!) from Boston, it continued to grow and prosper. Numerous inns, taverns and shops were built to cater to all of the traders coming and going thru

the town. In 1798 and in 1800, **Cynthia Dunbar** and **John Thoreau** moved to Concord with their families as young children. The two met, eventually fell in love and were married in May of 1812 shortly before the start of a second war with the British; the **War of 1812**. This war was much shorter. It ended in 1814, when a new revolution, the **Industrial Revolution**, was picking up steam in Massachusetts. During this time of peace, prosperity and independence, John and Cynthia Thoreau had their third child, **David Henry Thoreau** born on **July 12th 1817**. Only six weeks later, his **Uncle David Thoreau** passed away and so he would be later baptized with the name of David Henry. Thoreau would later state that he was born in "**the most**

estimable (deserving of esteem) **place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too."**

School Years and Nature

Young Thoreau enjoyed his native Concord and lived a small-town boy's life that was typical of the early 19th century. He "learned his ABC's at a private 'infant' school, and if he were bad, he would be shut into a dark garret staircase for punishment." Then, he attended public grammar school where he learned passages from the Bible and English classics such as **Shakespeare** and **Bunyan**. Despite being a good student and he did not always fit in.

"Many of his classmates considered him 'stupid' and

'unsympathetic' because he would not join in their games. They could not recollect his ever playing with them, for he preferred to stand on the sidelines and watch. He was so quiet and solemn that their favorite nickname for him was 'Judge' but when they wanted to tease him, they called him 'the fine scholar with the big nose.'"

At age 11, Thoreau and his older brother **John Jr.** were enrolled in **Concord Academy** despite the family's struggle to meet the five dollar tuition per quarter per pupil. His parents had always pushed for their children to achieve the best education that they could afford. At the academy, they read Greek and Roman classics in their original languages as well as geography, history, grammar, math and composition. Here Thoreau became active in the debating society until the creation of a new venue - the **Concord Lyceum** in 1829.

Despite his boyhood reputation of being a **stoic**, he quickly developed deep appreciation for and relationship with nature. His mother fostered this by often taking her children outdoors to hear bird songs, to enjoy wild

flowers, to pick huckleberries for pudding and to visit nearby hills, cliffs, rivers and ponds. These memorable outdoor opportunities were a treat for him in contrast to the dreaded **Puritan Sundays**, in which he had to remain indoors.

Pencil Success

During Thoreau's schooling, his father's years of misfortune in business came to an end with help and a little luck from his **Uncle Charles Dunbar**. In 1821 while hiking in New Hampshire, Uncle Charles discovered a **plumbago** (graphite) deposit and staked claim to it. He soon embarked upon creating a pencil making business. But competition existed in town from William Munroe who had started a making the first American pencils, ten years prior. Charles soon enlisted the help of John Thoreau, who was able to quickly improve the quality of their pencils. Over the next few years, the business was so successful that it was re-named John Thoreau & Co. and it out-competed the Munroes. John Thoreau was finally a success in business and now able to support his family of a wife, two sons and two daughters.

Higher Education

By age 16, Thoreau completed his schooling at Concord Academy and his parents decided that he should attend **Harvard College**. Deemed more scholarly, he was chosen over his brother John Jr. to attend college and to represent the family. Fortunately with the family pencil business prospering, the family was able to find the necessary funds to pay the \$ **179** in expenses per year. Harvard, at that time emphasized the classics as well and student life was not easy.

"Morning-prayers ... in winter, about half an hour before sunrise in a bitterly cold chapel. Thence...passed into several recitation-rooms ...and three-quarters of an hour later the bell rang for a second set of recitations...then came breakfast, which ...consisted solely of coffee, hot rolls and butter...between ten and twelve every student attended another recitation or a lecture. Dinner was at half-past twelve...There was another recitation in the afternoon then evening prayers at six...then evening meal, plain as the breakfast, with tea instead of coffee, and cold bread, of the

consistency of wool...After tea the dormitories rang with song and merriment till the study-bell, at eight...sounded the curfew for fun and frolic, proclaiming dead silence throughout the college premises, under the penalty of a domiciliary visit from the officer of the entry, and, in case of a serious offense, of private or public admonition."

Harvard gave Thoreau his first access to a large and high quality library, which he took great advantage of. He now had the opportunity to read books from foreign writers and distant lands, without the high cost of buying such literature. He later stated that "the library was the best gift the college had to offer."

Also, he made sure to get outdoors and explore the banks of the **Charles River** so that he could observe all the wildlife. For example, "all one winter he visited daily the nest of a weasel in a hollow apple tree." These adventures were a beneficial and delighted break from his indoor routine of attending class and studying. He was an excellent student and often "he was awarded \$25 in "exhibition money for his high grades." Despite the library and his

success, Thoreau always longed for his hometown of Concord and visited as often as possible. Graduation came in late August of **1837** after a 6-week summer vacation. He took full advantage of this time off and spent the time sharing a hut with a classmate, **Charles Stearns Wheeler**, on the shore of **Flint's Pond** in **Lincoln, Massachusetts**. Not more than just a shanty with straw bunks, the two young men had a leisurely outdoor retreat.

"The two ate their meals with the Wheeler family, spending their time at the hut, reading, loafing and sleeping that must have helped to stabilize Thoreau's precarious health."

Thoreau earlier had to withdraw temporarily from Harvard in 1836 due to illness, which is thought to be one of his first bouts with **tuberculosis or (consumption)**, a disease which threatened him throughout the rest of his life.

Thoreau's graduating class received what would become a now famous commencement address from **Ralph Waldo Emerson** titled the "**American Scholar**". It

called for a truly American literature and is often referred to America's intellectual declaration of independence.

Teaching Attempt, Name Change, Odd-Ball, Emerson

As a college graduate, David had four occupations from which to choose: minister, lawyer, doctor or teacher. David chose to become a teacher. Thoreau was soon rewarded for his studies by being offered a teaching position in his hometown. He accepted and was very fortunate to obtain it as the country was in the midst of an **economic depression**. His good fortune did not last, as Thoreau's public teaching career ended quickly. David resigned after just two-weeks for not wanting to discipline his students with a whip, which was a common practice. He only wanted to teach his way. His resignation did not sit well with the local community. People thought it was odd that someone would give up a good job during a depression and that students had always been whipped.

Around this same time, David changed his christened name from "David Henry" to

"**Henry David.**" He just changed it without the legal process of that time. His neighbors did not approve of someone changing what they considered was their God-given name and that one should be satisfied with their name.

"Henry D. Thoreau - Henry D. Thoreau....His name ain't no more Henry D. Thoreau than my name is Henry D. Thoreau. And everybody knows it, and he knows it. His name's Da-a-vid Henry and it ain't never been nothing but Da-a-vid Henry. And he knows that!"

Both of these "irregular" actions brought him a lot of attention and ire from the local community. Despite all the criticism, Henry always stuck by his decisions and went to work in his father's pencil factory. He continued to look for other teaching positions, but they were scarce. Soon he became friends with **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, a prominent Concord citizen, who saw a lot of promise in the young man. The more senior, Boston-born Emerson, wrote lectures and books, and published his first book titled *Nature* in 1836. This friendship would last a lifetime and was invaluable.

In 1837, Henry read *Nature* and it had a great influence on him.

Teaching Success and Tragedy

Henry David's friendship with Emerson and lack of teaching positions created a spark of interest to become an author, like the successful Emerson. By 1837, Emerson had persuaded Henry to start writing in a journal which he did almost daily until his death. After a year of unfruitful searching for another teaching position, Henry decided to create his own.

So in September of 1838, Henry opened his own school called **Concord Academy** for both young girls and boys. The academy soon became a success and enrollment swelled enough that another teacher was needed. Therefore, Henry's older brother, **John Jr.**, joined him. The school was praised for its innovations; "It was one of the first in our educational history to operate on the principle of 'learning by doing' and to devote a considerable part of its program to field trips." On weekly field trips, the students, both girls and boys,

were taught about the area's history of the Indians and of natural history. These were two of Henry's life long passions and he was always eager to impress others with the wonders of both.

The two brothers enjoyed life in Concord running their own private school. On summer break from school in **1839**, the two brothers took a long desired boat trip on the **Concord and Merrimack Rivers**. Their good life was to turn suddenly. John's own struggle with tuberculosis forced their school to close in **1841**. Then, in **1842**, John Jr. died suddenly from **tetanus** at only 27 years old.

This tragedy great affected Henry. He was understandably depressed and did not seek work for a long period of time. Eventually, his family and friends persuaded Henry that he needed to find something new to help get on with his life. Henry's spark to become a writer became a flame. He had long thought of writing a book about the 1839 river voyage he took with his brother. He was eager to start fresh by moving to a quiet place where he could do so.

Previously Henry wrote in his journal, "I want to go soon and live away by the pond, where I shall hear only the wind...my friends ask what I will do when I get there. Will it not be employment enough to watch the progress of the season?" Thoreau thought about returning to Flint's Pond but **Mr. Flint** denied his request to build a cabin there. Disappointed, Henry remained emotionally restless as he felt he had little to show for his years.

Another alternative presented itself when Emerson's friend George Ripley invited Henry along with many other transcendentalists to move to Brook Farm, a communal experiment in the suburbs of Boston. At the farm, members, by pooling their resources, would work a few hours each day to earn enough to meet their needs. In his journal, Henry responded:

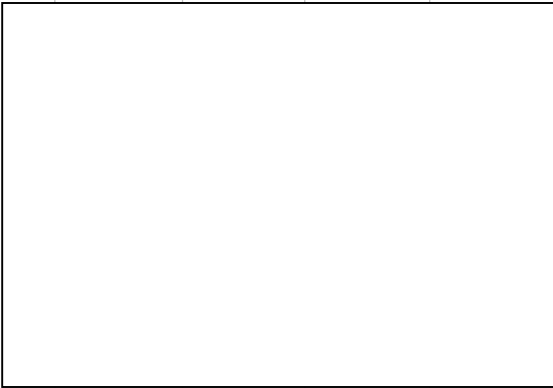
"As for these communities, I think I rather keep a bachelor's hall in hell than go to board in heaven...The tomb is the only boarding-house in which a hundred are served at once"

Henry was too much the individualist to let his freedoms go. Henry instead need to find another place to begin the new life he envisioned



Thoreau's Place and Time

Historical Context:



Thoreau's Life:

Before 1800	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807	1808
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Thoreau's Influences:

[illegible][illegible]

Historical Context

Parks As Classrooms at Walden Pond State Reservation

1775 Battle at the North Bridge (Concord, MA)	1803 Louisiana Purchase
1783 Treaty of Paris (ends the American Revolutionary War)	1812 The War of 1812
1820s The Industrial Revolution Begins	Late 1820s Lyceum movement sweeps across U.S. Concord Lyceum started in 1829
1844 Boston & Maine Railroad completes Fitchburg Line to Concord passing by Walden Pond	1836 Transcendental Club established in Massachusetts

Personal Influences

Parks As Classrooms at Walden Pond State Reservation

<p>1822 to 1827</p> <p>Thoreau's parents take young David Henry Thoreau out to explore the woods of Concord.</p>	<p>1821</p> <p>Uncle Charles discovers a plumbago (graphite) deposit in New Hampshire, which ultimately lead to the success of the Thoreau pencil business</p>
<p>1836</p> <p>Ralph Waldo Emerson publishes <i>Nature</i> and gives a copy to Henry David Thoreau</p>	<p>1841</p> <p>Brook Farm Community established and Henry David Thoreau invited to attend (he declines)</p>
<p>1817-1833</p> <p>Thoreau's mother, sister, and brother were all once employed as teachers. Family promotes and encourages Henry David Thoreau's education.</p>	<p>1842</p> <p>John Thoreau Jr. dies unexpectedly of tetanus</p>
<p>1844</p> <p>Ralph Waldo Emerson purchases 14 acres of land near Walden pond</p>	<p>1817</p> <p>Uncle David Thoreau dies</p>

Thoreau's Life

Parks As Classrooms at Walden Pond State Reservation

1817 David Henry Thoreau is born	1833 David Henry Thoreau enrolls at Harvard College to become a teacher
1837 David Henry Thoreau changes his name to Henry David Thoreau	1837 Ralph Waldo Emerson persuades Henry David Thoreau to start a journal
1838 Henry David Thoreau opens Concord Academy with his brother John Thoreau Jr.	1839 Boat trip with brother John Thoreau Jr. on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.
1844 Henry David Thoreau seeks a quiet location where he can write about his boat trip	1844 Henry Davit Thoreau asks Mr. Flint for permission to use his land to stay on but is denied

Thoreau's Words: Before and After

Henry David Thoreau's fairly straightforward process of getting his ideas to paper—one that most writers use—was that of drafting. Thoreau took field notes and compiled them in his journal. Henry then used his journal as a rough draft for his finished product. Compare this journal entry with the completed passage it inspired

Entry in Thoreau's Journal

Journal, May 16, 1860

The deciduous trees are just beginning to invest the evergreens, and this, methinks, is the very midst of the leafing season., when the oaks are getting into the gray.

A lupine will open to-day. One wild pink out. Red cherry apparently in prime.

A golden crowned thrush keeps the trunks of the young trees between me as it hops away.

Are those poplars the *tremuliformis* which look so dead south of Holbrook's land, not having leafed out?

Menyanthes, apparently a day or two. *Andromeda polifolia*, how long? *Andromeda calyculata* much past prime.

Nemopanthes, maybe a day or two out.

The swamps are exceedingly dry. On the 13th I walked wherever I wanted to in thin shoes in Kalmia Swamp, and to-day I walk through the middle of Beck Stow's. The river meadows are more wet, comparatively.

I pass a young red maple whose keys hang down three inches or more and appear to be nearly ripe. This, being a favorable light (on one side from the sun) and being of high color,—a pink scarlet,—is a very beautiful object, more so than when in flower. Masses of double samarae



unequally disposed along the branches, trembling in the wind. Like the flower of the shad-bush, so this handsome fruit is seen for the most part now against the bare twigs, it is so much in advance of it's own and other leaves. The peduncles gracefully rise a little before they curve downward. They are only a little darker shade than the samarae. There are sometimes three samarae together. Sun goes down red.

Thoreau's finished passage

From *Wild Fruits*, began in 1859, published posthumously in 2000

As it increases in size, the maple tops acquire a browner red, almost a birch red. About the middle of May, the red maples along the edge of the swamps, their fruit being nearly ripe, are among the most beautiful objects in the landscape, and more interesting than when in flower, especially if seen in a favorable light.

I stand now on the knoll in the midst of a swamp and observe a young red maple at its base a few rods off, on one side with respect to the sun. The keys are high-colored, a sort of pink scarlet, and hang down three inches or more. Masses of these double samarae with their peduncles gracefully rising a little before they curve downward, and only a little darker shade than the fruit, are unequally dispersed along the branches and trembling in the wind.

Henry David Thoreau's used a number of literary devices in his work- both in his final products and in his interim "drafts"—his journals. These are most notably when he is comparing nature and society. What literary devices are present in the passages below?

From "Conclusion" in *Walden*, 1854

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and I could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and we make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and although it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear that others may have fallen into it, and so helped keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below now.

From the "Pond in Winter" in *Walden*, 1854

They told me that they had some in the ice houses at Fresh Pond five years old which was as good as ever. Why is it that a bucket of water soon

becomes putrid, but frozen remains sweet forever?

It is commonly said that this is the difference between the affections and the intellect.

From his journal, June 30, 1840

I sailed from Fair Haven last evening as gently and steadily as the clouds sail through the atmosphere. The wind came blowing blithely from the southwest fields, and stepped into the folds of our sail like a winged horse, pulling with a strong and steady impulse. The sail bends gently to the breeze, as swells some generous impulse of the heart, and anon flutters and flaps with a kind of human suspense. I could watch the motions of a sail forever, they are so rich and full of meaning. I watch the play of its pulse, as if it were my own blood beating there. The varying temperature of distant atmospheres is graduated on its scale. It is a free buoyant creature, the bauble of the heavens and the earth. A gay pastime the air plays with it. If it wells and tugs, it is because the sun lays his windy finger on it. The breeze it plays with has been outdoors so long. So thin as it is, and yet so full of life; so noiseless when it labors hardest, so noisy and impatient when least serviceable. So I am blown on by God's breath, so flutter and flap, and fill gently out with the breeze.

Student timeline

Historical influences:

Student's timeline:

Personal influences: